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| 08/932,392 | 09/17/97 | SOUTAR | A 806287/0297A |

A JASON MIRABITO
WOLF GREENFIELD & SACKS
600 ATLANTIC AVENUE
BOSTON MA 02210

IM61/0601

EXAMINER

TALBOT, B

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1762

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.
08/932,392

Applicant(s)

Soutar et al.

Examiner

Brian K. Talbot

Group Art Unit

1762



☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Mar 18, 1998

☒ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

☒ Claim(s) 1-18, 20-26, and 34-44 is/are pending in the application.

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 1-18, 20-26, and 34-44 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☐ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--- SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ---

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1. The request for reconsideration, filed March 18, 1998 has been considered and entered.

Claims 1-18,20-26 and 34-44 remain in the application.

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. Claims 1,3-7,10-16,21-26 and 34-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553).

Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) teaches novel copper-silver metallic films prepared on transparent articles by chemical replacement of silver for copper. According to the method the transparent article is coated with copper by conventional methods of deposition. The copper article is then contacted by a solution comprising a silver salt, ammonia and a complexing agent which promotes replacement but which does not accelerate the oxidation of residual metallic copper in the film (see abstract). The surface of the substrate to be coated is first cleaned by conventional cleaning procedures (col. 2, line 67 - col. 3, line 2). The complexing agent utilized includes ethylenediamine tetra acetic acid (col. 3, lines 9-14). The concentration of silver nitrate is typically between 0.5 to 5.0 grams (col. 5, lines 29-35) or approximately 1 gram/l (see Examples). The concentration of complexing agent is from 1 to 8 grams/liter and depends upon

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the type utilized (col. 5, lines 35-45). The replacement solution is maintained in contact with the film at room temperature, i.e. 23°C, for a period of from less than one minute to five minutes (col. 5, lines 45-50) and can be in the range of 20°C to 90°C (col. 6, lines 62-65). The replacement solution is then rinsed from the article and dried with air (col. 5, lines 53-55). Thiosulfate complexing agent are not used since it has been found to accelerate the subsequent oxidation of residual copper in the film (col. 3, lines 14-17).

Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) fails to teach a silver plating solution which is free of ammonia ions or thiosulfate ions.

Mandich et al. (5,322,553) teaches electroless plating compositions which do not contain ammonia, formaldehyde, cyanide, etc. Mandich et al. (5,322,553) teaches that formaldehyde does not make the plating bath stable or commercially useful on a large scale, the use of ammonia either as a stabilizer, a main complexing agent or both is known to be very shock sensitive explosives when dried (col. 1, lines 10-30). The plating solution may also be cyanide-free (col. 1, lines 59-61).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Greenberg et al.'s (3,993,845) silver plating solution by making the plating solution free of ammonia as suggested by Mandich et al. (5,322,553) because one skilled in the art would want to avoid the problems associated with their use as evidenced above.

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It is noted that the references fail to teach the claimed pH , however, it is the Examiner's position that it is within the purview of one skilled in the art to obtain the optimal pH range through routine experimentation and that the pH is known to be a "cause effective" variable.

It is noted that claim 13 recites a specific thickness, i.e. 0.5 micrometers. It is the Examiner's position that thickness is a "cause effective" variable and it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to have obtained the optimal thickness through routine experimentation.

Claims 2,17,18 and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) further in view of Applicant's admitted state of the art (specification, pg. 1, line 8 - pg. 9, lines 26).

Features described above in rejecting claims 1,3-7,10-16,21-26 and 34-43 over Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) are incorporated here.

Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) fail to teach silver plating metal conductive pads, through holes and combinations thereof with the aid of masks for covering the areas desired to remain free of silver coating.

Applicant's admitted state of the art (specification, pg. 1, line 8 - pg. 9, lines 26) teaches that it is well known to utilize silver coating on copper substrates for protecting the copper from oxidation with the use of masks.

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Therefore, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized Greenberg et al.'s (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) silver replacement process for depositing silver on copper in Applicant's admitted state of the art (specification, pg. 1, line 8 - pg. 9, lines 26) printed circuit board construction because one skilled in the art would want to obtain the benefits associated with such a process, i.e. less oxidation of the copper surface as evidenced by Greenberg et al. (3,993,845).

Claims 8,9,20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) further in view of Leahy et al. (4,067,784).

Features described above in rejecting claims 1,3-7,10-16,21-26 and 34-43 over Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) are incorporated here.

Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) fail to teach incorporating surfactants, buffers, etc. in the silver plating solution.

Leahy et al. (4,067,784) teaches a non-cyanide acidic silver plating bath which incorporates a buffer and a surfactant. Additionally, the plating solution can contain brighteners and other additives known to those skilled in the art (col. 2, lines 25-65).

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Greenberg et al.'s (3,993,845) in view of Mandich et al. (5,322,553) silver plating solution by incorporating additives such as buffers and surfactants because one

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skilled in the art would want to obtain the benefits associated with their use as evidenced by Leahy et al. (4,067,784).

Response to Amendment

4. Applicant's arguments have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive.

Applicant argued that Greenberg et al. (3,993,845) and Mandich teach away from each other and therefore are not combinable.

The Examiner agrees in part. While the Examiner acknowledges the fact that each reference utilizes a solution which is free of an ingredient which the other reference utilizes, it is the Examiner's position that one skilled in the art would have been suggestive to utilize a solution which is free of either ammonia or thiosulfate ions with the expectation of achieving the advantages associated with the absence. Furthermore, the claims as written, as detailed below, recites that the coating solution be free of ammonia or thiosulfate. These references clearly meet this limitation.

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Applicant argued that the claim requires a composition that is free of ammonia ions, thiosulfate ions and a combination thereof and that the claim does not set forth the ammonia and thiosulfate ions in the alternative, but in the additive, i.e. neither.

The Examiner disagrees. Applicant is directed to the MPEP, section 2173.05(h), which states that the use of Markush terminology, i.e. selected from the group consisting of, is an acceptable form of and "alternative" expression. Hence, the items recited in a Markush claim are in the "alternative" not in the additive as argued by applicant. Therefore, the claim limitation is met by the reference as previously stated by the Examiner.

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian K. Talbot whose telephone number is (703) 305-3775.

bkt
May 28, 1998



Brian K. Talbot
Patent Examiner
AU 1762